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Police state lock-down fails to stop Mass protests vs NATO killers

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Chicago

This city was the scene of an historic outpouring of activism and indignation on May 20, when at least 15,000 people rallied and marched in opposition to the imperialist war policies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The demonstration took place in defiance of state and ruling-class intimidation, which was engineered by the city administration and the corporate media under the aegis of the White House and the Pentagon.

For weeks the local and national pro-business and military-friendly media had been inundated with reports of possible street violence and mass arrests. It was an attempt to discourage people from coming to Chicago for a series of activities that began on the weekend of May 12-13 with a People's Summit.

But it failed. The week witnessed numerous demonstrations in support of immigrant and workers' rights and in defense of the supposedly constitutionally protected ability to speak freely and congregate.

During the middle of the week, the home of a local activist in the Bridgeport neighborhood was raided by law enforcement. Three youth were beaten, arrested and charged with outrageously trumped-up charges of "terrorism." The activists were essentially disappeared until attorneys located them in a lock-up, shackled as if they were dangerous criminals.

Of course, the corporate media played its part by constantly repeating without question the bogus charges of operating a petrol bomb-making factory and planning attacks against the campaign headquarters of President Barack Obama, local police stations and other targets.

Chicago resembled an armed camp on May 19, just one day prior to the large rally and march. On nearly every street corner in the Loop, gangs of local Chicago police, Federal Protective Services officers, Cook County cops and FBI agents looked as if they were prepared to do battle against anyone who appeared to challenge their authority. At an otherwise peaceful demonstration against repression that day, police rammed bicycles and a vehicle into a crowd of several hundred activists in downtown Chicago.

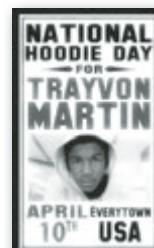
Rally & march, a significant victory

On May 20, in 90-degree heat, people began to gather at Grant Park as early as 10 a.m. for a scheduled noon rally. Numerous organizations set up literature tables, and people mingled free-

NATO SUMMIT

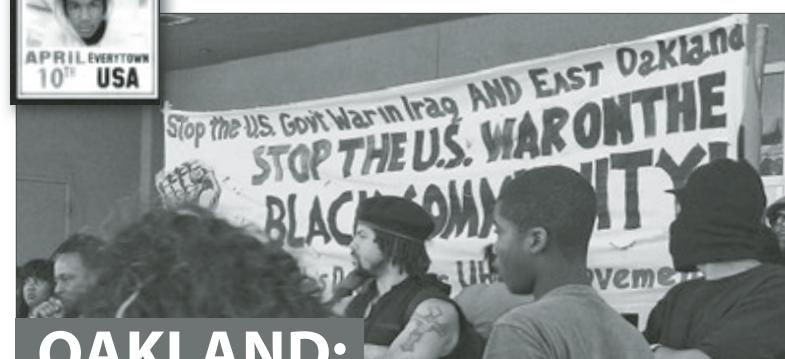
- **NATO crimes**
- **Violence-baiting and violent cops**
- **Workers World Party was there**
- **IAC leader gives thumbs-up**

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CHICAGO MAY 20



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

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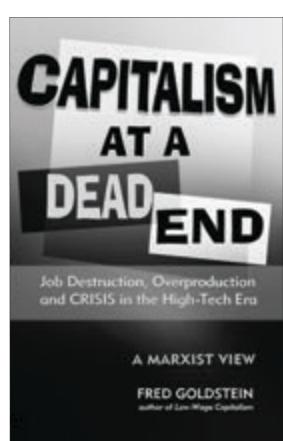
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Media uses evidence to demonize Trayvon Martin

By Monica Moorehead

Before the second-degree murder trial of George Zimmerman has even been set, a trial of public opinion is ongoing for Trayvon Martin, the 17-year-old, unarmed African American fatally shot by Zimmerman on Feb. 26 in Sanford, Fla. There is now a growing chorus of mainstream media asking the question if Zimmerman should even be brought to trial due to evidence released on May 17. The New York Times of May 16 published a major exposé of "missteps" by the Sanford police department, claiming that this may make it even harder to convict Zimmerman.

Zimmerman, a self-proclaimed neighborhood watchman living in a gated community, followed Martin after he left a convenience store and was heading back to the home of his father, whom he was visiting. In recorded 911 tapes, Zimmerman stated that Martin looked "suspicious" because he was Black and wearing a hoodie. A friend of Martin's told the police that he had told her during a phone call that he was being watched by a stranger, just minutes before he was killed.

The police did not initially charge Zimmerman with Martin's shooting, saying that the Stand Your Ground law was applicable to the case. SYG is a state law passed in 2005 that allows someone to claim self-defense if they feel threatened by others. Zimmerman told the police that Martin posed a threat to him, when in reality it was just the opposite. In fact, even the police stated that Martin would still be alive today if Zimmerman had taken their advice during the 911 call and not gone after him.

Due to the national outcry in the form of rallies and marches in large and small U.S. cities demanding the arrest of Zimmerman, a special prosecutor, Angela B. Corey, was assigned to the Martin case. On April 11, more than a month after the shooting, Corey and the Sanford police were forced by mass pressure to arrest Zimmerman. After less than two weeks in jail, he was released April 23 on a \$150,000 bond. He had to put up only \$15,000 bail and has not been seen in public since he was released and provided with a police escort.

An overview of evidence

On May 17, special prosecutor Corey released to the public 183 pages of documents on the Martin case. The pre-trial documents include eyewitness statements, medical reports, various investigation reports, photos and much more.

One of the documents that is receiving a great deal of attention is part of the autopsy report saying that Martin



March 21, Union Square, New York City.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

had low-level traces of marijuana in his blood and urine. While some legal experts say this evidence would not benefit either the defense or the prosecution during trial, the media are making it a major focus. This is meant to demonize Martin in the eyes of the public, along with Martin's alleged association with a local fight club.

The media are also showing photos of Zimmerman's alleged injuries, supposedly sustained in a struggle with Martin, to once again build a negative image of Martin being the aggressor and Zimmerman a helpless victim. Zimmerman was tested for taking a drug for insomnia and anxiety.

On the other hand, a witness who knows Zimmerman firsthand told the police, "I don't at all know who this kid [Trayvon Martin] was or anything else. But I know George, and I know that he does not like Black people. He would start something. He's very confrontational. It's in his blood. We'll just say that." (www.huffingtonpost.com, May 17) Zimmerman has a known history of making previous 911 calls about young Black men. A former co-worker of Zimmerman's, who is of Middle Eastern descent, told the police that Zimmerman bullied him due to his nationality, along with other co-workers.

Contrast the soft glove treatment Zimmerman received to that of Marissa Alexander. An African-American mother of young children, living in Jacksonville, Fla., Alexander was recently sentenced to 20 years in

prison for defending herself under the same SYG law. It took a jury only 12 minutes to convict her for firing a warning shot in the air to repel an abusive spouse who had a known history of repeatedly physically and mentally abusing her.

Corey stated that the conviction of Alexander was justified because she shot the gun out of "anger" and not "fear." Her lawyers are appealing her sentence and there are numerous petitions demanding her freedom.

The fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin is not just about the senseless loss of life of one young person. Trayvon Martin has evolved into a major symbol of a racist war against Black and Brown youth throughout the U.S. Wearing a hoodie at a rally or demonstration has, in turn, evolved into a conscious, political act of defiance against racist vigilantism, police brutality or mass incarceration.

If the charges are dropped against Zimmerman, or if he is not convicted, it will send another chilling message to all youth of color that their lives are not valued under a capitalist system that relies on an ideology of white supremacy to keep the 1% in power over the 99%. Demanding the legal conviction of Zimmerman, while very important, is not enough. The courts cannot be trusted to care about justice for people of color like Trayvon Martin and Marissa Alexander. The courts must feel the righteous, organized anger of the masses in the streets with demands like "No justice, no peace!" □

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal on



Capt. Reggie Schell: Black Panther 1941-2012

PVN PHOTO

Taken from a May 11 audio column posted at prisonradio.org.

He was born Richard Reginald Schell, but most people knew him as Reggie, and those who worked with him called him "Cap" — short for Captain — the rank he held in the Philadelphia Branch of the Black Panther Party. He was a patient and wise teacher, and looked out for younger Panthers, including this writer.

He wasn't the first nor the last captain in Philadelphia, but his tenure marked the expansion of the local office, from one storefront on the old Columbia Ave. (now Cecil B. Moore Ave.) to at least five offices citywide.

His term of office was one of conflict and confrontation, and during the Rizzo years (under former police commissioner and late city mayor Frank L. Rizzo) that conflict turned into a shooting war.

He built the local chapter into an office that was the pride of the state and the bane of the state. It was late summer 1970, when city police attacked local Black Panther offices in North Philly, West Philly and Germantown in the wee morning hours.

Panthers shot back. Panthers were busted citywide, just as BPP offices were raided nationally.

The city raids were designed to deter people from attending the Revolutionary Peoples Constitutional Convention when people, mostly activists, would gather together to write a new revolutionary constitution for a new, revolutionary America.

The raids backfired, for afterwards, support came from all quarters, even those which had previously avoided the Panthers.

But even after the dissolution of the Party, Reggie continued his work by founding the Black United Liberation Front composed mostly of local ex-Panthers. The issues were the same — protecting and defending the rights of Black people, fighting against police brutality, for decent housing, and against the prison-industrial complex. He worked closely with any group or individual who could help, and had a close and personal working relationship with the late North Philadelphia-based cleric, Father Paul Washington, long-time rector of the Church of the Advocate.

In later years, even when under the ravages of kidney disease so serious it required weekly dialysis, Reggie Schell was at his post, ignoring his pain, passing out leaflets on C. B. Moore Ave., or painting signs of protest for passersby.



Marcus Schell, Reggie Schell, Fred Hampton, Jr.

Above all things, he loved Black people. He died as he lived — as a revolutionary, relentless, determined, straight ahead.

Reggie Schell returned to his ancestors on the early hours of May 9, 2012. He was two months shy of his 71st birthday.

He is survived by his four adult children, Dessalina, Leslie, Marcus and Richard Reginald. He had a dozen grandchildren and a half-a-dozen great-grands.

Reggie Schell — Captain, Black Panther Party; founder, Black United Liberation Front; revolutionary; soldier for the Black Nation — will be long remembered!

All Power to the People! □

Two attorneys vindicated

Win compensation after police beating

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

A victory was won in the struggle against police brutality on May 11 when the New York Police Department and the City of New York opted to settle a federal suit brought against them by Michael Tarif Warren and Evelyn Warren. While coming to the defense of a young man they witnessed being beaten by police, the two had been brutalized and arrested in 2007. Rather than face trial, the City will pay the Warrens a sum of \$360,000.

Michael Tarif Warren is a New York attorney well known for representing victims of police brutality or their families, including Michael Stewart, Yvonne Smallwood, Sadiki "Bro. Shep" Ojore Olugbala, and the five Black teenagers falsely accused and convicted of raping "the Central Park Jogger." (justiceforwarrens.org)

On June 21, 2007, the Warrens had stopped their car at a red light in Brooklyn, N.Y., when they witnessed NYPD officers chase a young man and then beat him in full view of passersby, including children. When Michael Tarif Warren stepped out of his car and yelled to the police to stop beating the young man, the police, including a sergeant, approached the Warrens' car and proceeded to beat Michael Tarif Warren. They then dragged him out

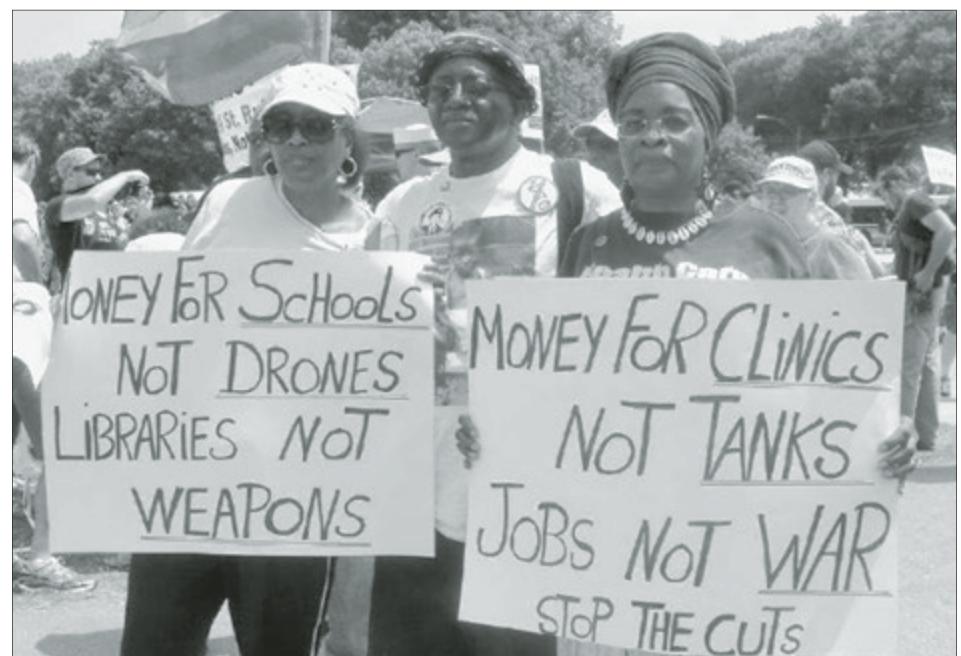


PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Michael Tarif Warren and Evelyn Warren.

of the car and arrested him. When Evelyn Warren, who is also a practicing lawyer, objected to what was happening, police hit her in the face and arrested her as well.

The police were not ready, however, for the response that ensued. Within hours hundreds of supporters of the two gathered at the 77th Precinct, where the Warrens had been taken, refusing to leave until the two had been released. The police were forced to relent. Months later, the criminal charges against the Warrens were dropped by the district attorney. The Warrens then filed the civil rights lawsuit against the City and the NYPD.



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

Poverty in the oppressed communities in the U.S. is accompanied by more police attacks, like the attack on the Warrens.

An email from the Warrens' attorney, Jonathan Moore, states, "Although there is the standard no admission of liability, the amount of the settlement speaks for itself in terms of whether there was wrongdoing on the part of officers in the NYPD."

This important victory frees Michael Tarif Warren to continue his work defending others abused at the hands of

the police. He is currently representing Bro. Shaka Shakur, who was arrested after police raided his Bronx, N.Y., apartment with a trumped-up warrant. Shakur is the co-founder of the People's Survival Program, which provides members of the Harlem, N.Y., community with much-needed services like food, clothing, and assistance in housing and health care. □

OAKLAND, CALIF.

Community demands justice for Blueford

Alan Blueford, an 18-year-old Black student at Oakland's Skyline High School, slated to graduate next month, was killed by Oakland police on May 6 in East Oakland, Calif. His family says that he and two friends were just waiting for some young women who planned to meet them on the corner of 90th and Birch streets when the cops approached them with guns drawn for no justifiable reason. Their crime? Being Black young men on a corner.

Oakland police are notorious for violence against Black youth. Blueford ran for two blocks, after which he was shot three times by one of the cops. The police

wouldn't even give out the name of the cop who shot him. Members of Blueford's family went to a meeting of the Oakland City Council to demand some answers. Demanding justice, more than a hundred community members packed the chambers and the balconies in support.

The family's next step is holding a rally at the Alameda District Attorney's office on May 23. They are demanding the following: Release the name of the cop who shot Alan Blueford, take him off paid leave, fire him and charge him with murder.

— Terri Kay



PHOTO: GENE PEPI

U.S. chapter of Int'l League of Peoples' Struggle launched

By Bill Dores
Chicago

Thousands of people poured into this city by the lake on the May 19-20 weekend. A few were high officials, prime ministers and presidents. They came to attend the summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a military alliance of the United States, Canada and Western European powers. Hiding behind masses of heavily armed police, they wined and dined and plotted new wars against poor people in Africa and Asia.

Many thousands more, working and jobless, students, retirees and military veterans, came to protest their plans for endless wars and endless war spending. Several hundred among them also came to attend a different summit meeting. Mostly young and mostly people of color,



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

they packed El Centro Autonomo, a community hall in Chicago's largely immigrant Albany Park neighborhood.

The theme of the May 19 assembly was "Unite with the Global 99% Against Monopoly Capital, the Source of Economic Crisis, Racism and War." Their purpose was to launch the United States Country

Chapter of the International League of Peoples Struggle.

The ILPS could be called the anti-NATO. It unites nearly 400 mass organizations in 43 countries on six continents. It represents workers, peasants and fishers, students, indigenous people, the urban poor, environmentalists, human rights lawyers and advocates, antiwar activists and fighters for women's and queer rights. With all their diversity, they are united in seeing imperialism, the global system of monopoly capitalism that is centered on Wall Street, as the primary enemy of working class and oppressed people all over the world.

The U.S. Chapter of ILPS was launched by 28 local and national member organizations. They included the International Action Center, the U.S. branch of the Philippine mass movement Bayan (New Patriotic Alliance), the Philippine women's organization Gabriela and youth organization

Anakbayan, the People's Organization for Progress, the Palestine Youth Movement, the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, Solidarity with Iran, Alianza Boricua, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, and Chelsea (Mass.) Uniting Against the War. It will join four other ILPS country chapters in the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia and Canada.

Gathered beneath brightly painted murals and banners, the assembly was opened with a Skype message from the league's chair, exiled Philippine revolutionary leader Jose Maria Sison. He said, "We appreciate the significance and urgency of the theme of your assembly: 'Unite with the Global 99% Against Monopoly Capital, the Source of Economic Crisis, Racism and War'; build a brighter future that is ours! You are responding to the challenge posed by the rapidly worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. It is imperative that you raise the level of

Continued on page 6

Protest tells Pa. guv: 'Shut prisons, not schools!'



Hundreds of community activists chanted and rallied outside the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce on May 15 while Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett was inside speaking before the wealthy elite of this highly segregated city. The protesters were particularly enraged by Corbett's massive cuts of \$264 million to higher education while increasing funds for prison construction by \$685 million.

Cuts totaling \$319 million in general assistance statewide, \$21.6 million for Philadelphia schools, and \$39.6 million for Philadelphia health programs were criticized by the diverse crowd.

Because of state slashing of funds for general assistance programs and decreased business taxes, more than 400 community residential beds may be eliminated, as well as case-management ser-

vices for people with chronic severe mental illness and those with substance-abuse issues. Homeless outreach services will be reduced, while detoxification, residential-rehab inpatient and outpatient treatment may be eliminated. Additionally, there will be a loss of hospice beds for those with AIDS; a reduction in nursing-home beds and maternal- and child-health services, including those for families with children of special needs; and cuts in prenatal care for the uninsured. These are just the cuts in services that Philadelphia will suffer because of the state's austerity plans.

Decarcerate PA, the Teacher Action Group, the Coalition Advocating for Public Schools, ACT UP, Fight for Philly and many other groups organized the loud demonstration.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

Mass protests vs NATO killers

Continued from page 1

California; Joe Lombardo of the United National Anti-War Coalition; the Rev. Jesse Jackson of the Rainbow/Push Coalition; and representatives of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

After the rally, people began to move into the streets outside the park in preparation for the march. Their signs and banners showed the protest had brought together a broad coalition of forces who work on issues related to police brutality, the environment, anti-foreclosure defense, Palestine solidarity, healthcare and other important causes.

Chicago Action Medical, which volunteered its services May 14-21, looked after people along the three-mile march. National Nurses United joined the march after speaking at the rally. Two days earlier, several thousand nurses had held their own rally in Chicago, linking the military budget and the profit making of Wall Street with the lack of healthcare coverage in the U.S.

Perhaps one of the most energetic sections of the march was the anti-imperialist contingent — composed of BAYAN-USA, the International League of Peoples' Struggle, Workers World Party, the International Action Center, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, Solidarity Iran and the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs, — which was positioned next to the Palestine solidarity delegation carrying the flag of that occupied territory.

All along the route of march Chicago police, Cook County sheriff deputies, Illinois State Police, FBI agents, Secret Service and other law-enforcement groups lined the sidewalks. At certain points the police were dressed in riot gear with batons.

Many cops were openly videotaping the demonstrators. But people on the sidewalks joined in

with the march or cheered it on.

Police attack as crowd begins to disperse

When the march reached Michigan Avenue and 21st Street, many people began to head back to their cars and buses. Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War began their own rally, at which they symbolically gave back medals awarded them by the military for service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This act of rejection and defiance was reminiscent of similar actions carried out by Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Washington, D.C., in April 1971. Many soldiers felt betrayed by the U.S. government and the generals for using them for the benefit of the ruling class.

It was at this point that police moved in and began to attack the remaining people. Buses were brought in filled with cops who provided reinforcements to those on the streets.

The attacks on the demonstrators were unprovoked and obviously preplanned. People were surrounded, beaten down and dragged around in the streets. Dozens were detained and some taken into custody.

Activists camped outside police stations all night waiting for word on the fate of their friends and comrades. Several people were beaten bloody by the cops, who were itching to carry out violence on the mostly youthful protesters.

On the following day, May 21, a demonstration outside Boeing Corporate Offices assailed its role in building the war machine and not paying taxes on its profits. The U.S. military budget now exceeds that of all other countries combined — some \$800 billion. This great wealth could be utilized to provide housing, healthcare, education and other essential services for workers, youth and the oppressed, who create everything but receive little in return. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

CIW targets Chipotle chain

After successfully helping to pressure Trader Joe's to sign the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Agreement in February, sumofus.org is supporting CIW's newest target: the national Chipotle chain. As the progressive website notes in its petition, "If you believe its marketing hype, you'd think Chipotle does everything it can to source its ingredients ethically." But even though it claims to promote "food with integrity" on its website, Chipotle has refused to sign the FFA. To help Florida tomato pickers, many of whom are immigrants, earn more than starvation wages and have better working conditions, sign the petition on the home page of sumofus.org. Many fast-food chains like McDonald's and Burger King, and retail food chains like Whole Foods, have already signed the FFA.

Raise minimum wage for tipped workers!

Did you know that tipped workers earn a much lower federal minimum wage than other workers? That their minimum of \$2.13 an hour hasn't gone up in 21 years? And that two-thirds of these workers are women? No wonder the Restaurant Opportunities Center called a protest on Equal Pay Day, April 18, outside the National Restaurant Association in Washington, D.C., to protest the NRA's opposition to raising the minimum wage for tipped workers. Dressed in black uniforms with white aprons, demonstrators chanted, "21 years of \$2.13, the NRA is greedy and mean!" ROC-Philly's Victoria Bruton said during the rally: "I serve families food for a living, but I've had to be on food stamps. We deserve a fair wage!" (Union City, online newsletter of Metro Washington AFL-CIO, April 18) And she's the rule, not the exception. According to a ROC report, servers, 71 percent of whom are women, "are almost three times more likely to be paid below the poverty line than the general workforce and are nearly twice as likely to need food stamps." The report also noted that keeping the federal minimum wage low for tipped workers is "institutionalizing the gender gap in pay." A ROC banner summed it up: "Women are worth more than \$2.13." The protest was supported by the National Organization for Women, MomsRising and other allies. (campusprogress.org, April 20)

L.A. port truckers win union

After a hard-fought, year-long battle for union recognition, the port truck drivers in Los Angeles who haul brand-name fashion imports voted April 12 to join Teamsters Local 70. The workers had to battle the Australian-owned, \$8.8 billion Toll Group, which waged a vicious, expensive, union-hostile campaign to intimidate workplace leaders and suppress free choice. Though the workforce is small — the vote was 46-15 — the union victory is huge, heralded by local and international supply chain workers, other labor unions and community allies as "a trailblazing private sector win in a market arena that decimated middle-class jobs when it was deregulated in 1980." After the workers exposed their misclassification as independent contractors and their inhumane, unsanitary working conditions (for details, see tinyurl.com/7z7zbsn), Toll retaliated with such hostile actions that it's facing a federal trial. The International Transport Workers Federation condemned Toll for undermining the rights of 110,000 U.S. port truck drivers and called for worldwide solidarity. The Transport Workers Union, which represents 12,000 Toll employees in Australia, answered with huge support. (press release, teamsterslocal70.org, April 12)

Too many job-related deaths

Every year since 1991, the AFL-CIO has commemorated workers killed at work and those who die from work-related causes on Workers Memorial Day, April 28. According to the 2012 edition of its report, "Death on the Job," 2010 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show 4,690 workers — an average of 13 a day — were killed at work, with an estimated 50,000 dying from occupational diseases. Latino/a workers, often immigrants working in high-risk construction jobs, continue to have the highest fatality rate — 3.9 per 100,000 workers. More than 3.8 million work-related injuries and illnesses were reported, but that's way below the reality. The report estimates an accurate toll is two to three times that — between 7.6 million and 11.4 million a year. The total cost of job injuries and illnesses is estimated at \$250 billion to \$300 billion a year. The report concludes that U.S. workers need more safety and health protection, not less. (AFL-CIO Now blog, May 2)

S.F. Labor Council supports protests of NATO/G8

The Executive Committee of the San Francisco Labor Council unanimously passed a resolution May 7 opposing the G8 nations for imposing harsh austerity measures on working people around the world and NATO for fighting unjust wars throughout the world, all while people in the U.S. have lost jobs and vital social services due to bloated military budgets. The resolution supported the anti-NATO protest in Chicago on May 20 that was endorsed by labor unions, community groups and anti-war organizations, and called for the permitted demonstration to be allowed to proceed peacefully so that the protesters' grievances could be heard. □

NATO Summit: 1%'s enforcers talk tactics

By John Catalinotto

While 15,000 people were braving police clubs and 50 U.S. military veterans were trashing their medals as they denounced NATO as a criminal military alliance, top officials from the 28 NATO members and some associates were proving that the demonstrators were right on target. NATO intervenes against the people of the world, even as Chicago cops do against protesters.

The NATO Summit's big public topic was the alliance's current hot war against the people of Afghanistan. President Barack Obama, who hosted the summit, announced that the war would finally wind down over the next two years. France's Francois Hollande said he'd pull out French troops before the end of 2012.

Washington had opened this war more than 10 years ago with some nominal NATO help as apparent revenge for the

Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The Pentagon named the operation "Enduring Freedom." The war has certainly endured, as has the slaughter of Afghans, and is now set to continue for two more years.

There is no evidence the war or the NATO operation has brought freedom or any other benefit to the Afghan people — just nighttime roundups, drone attacks and sometimes the casual slaughter of civilians by U.S. troops sent to occupy and repress a traumatized, hostile population.

Despite paper support from many NATO members, the U.S. still supplies 90,000 of the 130,000 foreign troops occupying Afghanistan. Annual costs for the puppet Afghan army are expected to be \$4.1 billion. France is supposed to pay about \$200 million of this as the blood price for pulling out its troops, while still remaining a charter member of the predatory alliance.

The lack of formal talks between Obama

and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari gave evidence that the "end game" in the region might go just as badly as the rest of the war. Pakistan has been blocking an essential supply route of NATO's occupation troops ever since a U.S. airstrike killed 24 Pakistani soldiers. The Pakistanis may reopen the route, but are asking for a toll of \$5,000 per truck instead of \$250 as in the past. (Chicago Sun Times, May 21)

U.S. bases threaten Russia, Europe

The other big issue at the summit was the U.S. plan to deploy the so-called missile shield to certain European countries, mainly Poland and the Czech Republic. Washington claims the shield is aimed at stopping missiles from Iran. Since Iran has neither nuclear weapons nor long-range rockets, the Russian government considers the shield an aggressive weapon aimed at Russia, one that gives the U.S. and NATO the option of a credible first nuclear strike.

Hollande's reaction to the missile shield gave an indication of what his recent election would mean for French foreign policy.

The Chicago Sun Times reported, "Hollande gave NATO something: He did not pursue objections to a new NATO ballistic missile system based in Europe; French reporters were told he got assurances from NATO that French companies would get some of that business." (May 21)

NATO's background

NATO was established in 1949 to prevent workers' revolutions in Western Europe and to confront the Soviet Union. The U.S. was, and remains, NATO's dominant member. While 28 NATO members and a couple dozen other countries were represented in Chicago, the core NATO members are the old colonial centers: France and Britain, plus Germany, Italy and other European colonial exploiters of Africa and Asia.

This inner core is the same as the G8, without Japan and Russia. These dominant Western imperialist powers control technology, banking, trade and currency worldwide. Almost every country in Europe is drafted into NATO and then forced to buy weapons from the main powers and supply cannon fodder for Washington's wars.

Since the downfall of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991, Washington has consciously turned NATO into a tool for maintaining its control in Europe and carrying out reconquest of the former colonial world.

NATO attacks throughout the 1990s dismembered Yugoslavia and subordinated its pieces — the remaining ministates — to Western European and U.S. imperialism. NATO has provided cover and backup for the occupation of Afghanistan. In 2011 NATO bombed Libya for seven months, destroying that country and making it possible for the Western oil monopolies to pick up the pieces. Now NATO is involved in trying to overthrow the government of Syria.

All the propaganda about "humanitarian interventions" used as a pretext for these operations of conquest are just that: lies. There is no possible progressive role for this brutal military machine. The veterans who destroyed their medals have recognized this — and everyone should.

The spin doctors for imperialism knew what they were doing when they moved the G8 from Chicago to Camp David. It would have been too obvious that while the G8 Summit coordinated the economic interests of the 1 percent of the 1%, the NATO Summit coordinated their enforcers. □



Int'l League of Peoples' Struggle, Chicago, May 20.

WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKWE

sembly of the heroic three-month strike being waged by students in Quebec and of the fascistic emergency law imposed to try to suppress their struggle. Venezuelan Consul General Jose Rodriguez y Espinoza also addressed the assembly.

Then the youth and veterans who packed El Centro moved on to the main task of the day: launching the U.S. Country Chapter. During several hours of discussion they adopted bylaws, resolutions and a general program of action that made clear ILPS-US will be an activist organiza-

tion focusing on anti-imperialist education and mobilization. A country coordinating committee, headed by Kuusela Hilo of Bayan USA and Bill Dores of the International Action Center, was elected to implement the chapter program.

On May 20, ILPS members helped lead a militant and disciplined national liberation support contingent in the 12,000-strong march on the NATO summit at McCormick Place. Kuusela Hilo of ILPS co-chaired the rally with Joe Iosbacher of the Committee to Stop FBI Repression. □

U.S. chapter of ILPS

Continued from page 4

your unity, organization and militancy in line with the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle of the people of the world."

The assembly was welcomed to Chicago by Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. of the Black Panther Party Prisoners of Conscience Collective. Hampton is the son of Illinois Black Panther Party Deputy Chairman Fred Hampton, who was murdered in his bed by a Chicago police death squad on Dec. 4, 1969. Hampton put the massive mobilization of Chicago police to terrorize anti-NATO protesters in historical context. He also noted that May 19 is the birthday of peoples' heroes Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh.

Other speakers included veteran Chicano activist Carlos Montes, who cofounded the Brown Berets in 1967; Hatem Abu-dayeh, of the U.S. Palestinian Community Network; and Minneapolis antiwar activist Stefanie Yorek, of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization/Fightback. All three have had their homes raided and ransacked by the FBI and their property confiscated. Montes was framed on phony felony charges and goes to trial June 20.

ILPS General Secretary Malcolm Guy of Montreal delivered solidarity greetings from the Canada chapter. He told the as-

sembly of the heroic three-month strike being waged by students in Quebec and of the fascistic emergency law imposed to try to suppress their struggle. Venezuelan Consul General Jose Rodriguez y Espinoza also addressed the assembly.

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IAC leader assesses Chicago march

Workers World asked Sara Flounders, a national coordinator of the International Action Center and member of the Steering Committee of the United National Anti-war Coalition, for her assessment of the May 20 demonstration in Chicago.

First, I want to congratulate the organizers, CANG8, for a well-organized, powerful, united mass rally with a focused message against NATO, NATO's wars, growing repression and the disastrous cuts in every U.S. social program. May 20 was, despite all the threats and violence baiting, the largest antiwar demonstration in years.

The march looked tremendous! The important participation of the veterans and the image of returning their medals, combined with the contingent against political repression that united with Palestinian and Philippine activists, the many signs of "No war on Iran," "Troops out of

Afghanistan," "Stop drone attacks," the signs for Bradley Manning and against cutbacks and racism, along with union participation — it all showed a powerful level of developing unity with the struggle here and around the world.

These are images that NATO generals and the whole corporate and military establishment want to totally bury.

This whole week of activity has taken the movement to a new level and nationally helped the young Occupy movement understand NATO as an enemy of humanity.

We shouldn't be surprised at the corporate media's focus on the fabricated "violence of the demonstrators." They have to hide any understanding of NATO as a criminal conspiracy, committed to violence, corporate domination and human degradation.

But the overwhelming numbers of police, the threatening equipment and tactics of the state's repressive apparatus,

combined with the level of police violence in Chicago, were so outrageous that they fully exposed the violence of NATO, more clearly than words and signs could ever do.

It's clear once again that NATO rules through fear. In this period of unsolvable capitalist crisis, this is their only weapon. The police, the city officials, the compliant media did everything to terrorize the population of Chicago and the region from even coming downtown on Sunday. All of this was meant to undermine support for the demonstration — and to demonize and criminalize our youth as the supposed source of violence. That makes the turnout an even greater accomplishment.

We should take note of the police interference in internet, global positioning system and text messaging throughout the day. U.S. officials denounce and lecture other countries around the world when they do this, but in the face of one demonstration, they have done the same.



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER
Alison Bodine of Movement Against War and Occupation, Vancouver, Canada.

When returning home, we can't forget the youth rounded up in Chicago who now face outrageous charges of terrorism, conspiracy, enormous bails and possibly long trials. The anti-war movement must make the police-state tactics a national issue. □

Demonstration exposes NATO as real source of violence

By Caleb T. Maupin
Chicago

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is one of the most violent groupings of oppressors in the world. NATO was formed after World War II to try to stop the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Red Army from driving out the imperialists and beginning socialist construction in countries that had been liberated from fascist rule. One of NATO's first acts was to defend the autocratic Greek monarchy against a popular democratic and anti-imperialist people's movement.

More recently, NATO has bombed and destroyed Libya and continues to occupy Afghanistan.

Justifiably, millions throughout the world loathe NATO and its murderous reign of drone strikes, military occupations, bombings of civilians and unrestrained violence in service of the bankers and corporations in Western capitalist countries. Many felt it necessary to protest against NATO's May 20 summit in Chicago.

The strategy of NATO and its backers in the halls of power was to isolate the protesters with deceptive rhetoric about "violence." These efforts failed.

In the lead-up to the NATO summit in Chicago, the media were filled with stories demonizing the planned mass demonstrations. Buildings in downtown Chicago had routine terrorism drills. Employees in the downtown area were warned to "dress like a protester" to avoid being assaulted by protesters. But even security director Mark Anderson confirmed, "There's no data out there to substantiate somebody being targeted or hassled because of their affiliation with their firm or their occupation." (chicagobusiness.com, May 8)

Repression failed to suppress protests

Major roads were closed. High school and college graduations were cancelled.

Public transportation was reduced. Meanwhile, the notoriously brutal Chicago police collaborated with the Secret Service, the FBI and the Illinois State National Guard to suppress the planned demonstrations.

Academi, the private military contractor once known as Blackwater, which has been exposed for its extremely ruthless practices in Iraq, Afghanistan and New Orleans, was on the scene as well.

Several days before the mass march, an apartment in Chicago was raided and nine youth were arrested. The police claimed they were manufacturing explosives. Their lawyer has pointed out that the only thing police found was beer-making equipment. The youth were prevented from seeing a lawyer for 17 hours. Their bail was set at \$1 million.

The youth suspect that the entire raid was merely retaliation for a video they had posted on the internet earlier in the week, exposing police harassment they had already endured.

The same word that NATO forces use to justify their brutal drone attacks on civil

ians in Asia and Africa is now being used against activist youth. They are being charged under an obscure Illinois "anti-terrorism" law.

Despite the repressive atmosphere, busloads of Occupy protesters from throughout the U.S. poured into Chicago several days in advance, setting up tents in parks and sleeping in nearby churches.

When the protest called by the United National Anti-War Committee and the Coalition Against NATO/G8 War and Poverty Agenda finally took place on May 20, more than 15,000 people participated, despite all the hype and repression.

As the march ended, the police herded the large crowd of protesters into a small area, not allowing people to leave. As they were pushed against each other, some militant youth pushed back, trying to prevent the crowd from being packed even tighter than before.

The police then attacked the crowd with wooden batons and night sticks. Countless people were severely bloodied



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

and injured as police weapons connected with their skulls. Pepper spray was used, and other acts of violence were unleashed against the peaceful crowd before the police finally allowed people to leave the demonstration. Those who sought medical attention for their injuries were arrested at nearby hospitals.

Despite the heavy repression and media hype, the streets of Chicago were filled with support for the protests. Any hostility toward the demonstrators was rare, and nearly all on the streets were united in their disgust at the extreme police crackdown. Bus drivers, store clerks and workers in the downtown area supported the protests almost unanimously.

The effort to isolate some sections of the anti-NATO protests by labeling them "violent" failed. When the police brutality was unleashed, all major leaders of the demonstration came to the defense of the victims. The people's movement against NATO and its crimes overcame incredible odds and successfully exposed NATO for what it truly is — the real source of violence in the world.

The struggle to drop the false terrorism charges and win justice for those who suffered brutality on May 20 continues. □



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

WWP active in 10 days of anti-NATO protests

By Frank Neisser
Chicago

For 10 days Workers World Party members and friends actively worked with the peoples' mobilization against the NATO Summit of the war-makers in Chicago to build momentum toward the magnificent May 20 march.

The Coalition Against NATO/G8 War & Poverty Agenda (CANG8) sponsored the main march. WWP's delegation, with people from Chicago, Detroit, New York, Boston and cities in Wisconsin and Utah, participated in meetings, marches, press conferences, pickets and rallies.

WWP activists got out thousands of copies of Workers World newspaper and thousands of a special supplement — headlined "Unite to fight racism and imperialism — Abolish NATO — Defend the right to protest — Peoples' Power — Next step DNC and RNC" — at all the week's events.

Those distributing WW had great discussions with veterans eager to expose NATO's true role, students considering what Peoples' Power might look like, and activists learning first-hand about the role of the cops as the domestic arm of NATO's war machine.

Protest & solidarity

On May 12-13, CANG8 and Occupy Chicago held a People's Summit to discuss the issues.

Occupy Chicago called a week of daily anti-NATO actions for May 14-21. These included a Monday, May 14, education rally at a high school the Chicago Board of Education had listed for closure. A May 15 march for immigrant rights went through immigrant neighborhoods and concluded with a direct civil disobedience action: occupying the Chicago Immigration and Customs Enforcement office by sitting-in and blockading the doors. On May 16, a militant march in support of a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions targeted the Bank of America.

On May 17, Workers World Party held a public forum on "NATO, Tool of the 1%." WWP First Secretary Larry Holmes, who is also coordinator of the Bail Out the People Movement and Occupy 4 Jobs, discussed the significance of the Occupy movement in the context of the world uprising against the NATO/G8 program of war, cutbacks and austerity.

Representatives of the local housing struggle and Final Call, the newspaper of the Nation of Islam, participated. A representative of the Committee against FBI Repression, who was herself one of the 24 anti-war and international solidarity activists whose homes were raided by the FBI in September 2010, spoke of the case of Carlos Montes, who goes on trial in Los Angeles in June.

Earlier that day, WWP members and supporters participated in a rally in solidarity

with Carlos Montes at the Dirksen Federal Building, where the investigation against the 24 and Montes is headquartered.

WWP members also attended a press conference and a march condemning the police invasion of the home of Occupy Chicago activists and protesting that three of them were held on bogus terrorism charges. Cops seized a home beer-making kit and spun a story that it was to be used for making molotov cocktails.

On May 19, WWP and International Action Center members participated in the founding conference of the U.S. Chapter of the International League of Peoples' Struggle.

Later that day, WWP members were central organizers of a "NATO — EU — Hands Off Greece!" demonstration at the Greek Consulate. They expressed solidarity with the Greek workers, who have rejected all political parties that have agreed to the European Union's and the banks' super-austerity program.

At the huge May 20 antiwar demonstration, WWP staffed two literature tables and got out hundreds of Workers World newspapers. The WWP organizers, including a large delegation from Detroit, joined the ILPS contingent. WWP's lead banner read, "Abolish NATO, Tool of Wall Street Rule, We Need Jobs Not War." □



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

G8 SUMMIT

No relief for Greece & Europe's workers

By John Catalinotto

The recent G8 summit did nothing to relieve the worldwide capitalist crisis that has cost up to 80 million jobs worldwide since 2008. Nor did it help feed the hungry, stop global warming or prevent wars.

This should be no surprise as none of these problems was really on the meeting's agenda. Its main preoccupation was the financial crisis in Europe and the possibility that Greece will default on bond payments and/or leave the euro zone.

The G8 meeting included the leaders of the seven most powerful imperialist countries — the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Canada — as well as Russia, which, even though it is now a capitalist country, is unwelcome in the inner circle of historical imperialist world powers.

The summit was not aimed at relieving the problems of the billions of people whose economic conditions these imperialists' actions affect. These leaders represent the bankers, billionaires and generals who run capitalist society — the top 1% of the 1%.

The G8 summit, which had at first been scheduled to take place in Chicago during the same week as the NATO summit, instead moved away from any population center to the woods at Camp David, Md. This gathering of capitalist thieves also reached no significant agreement on their goal: a common strategy to confront Europe's financial crisis, which impacts the entire world economy.

During the summit U.S. President Barack Obama and French Prime Minister Francois Hollande publicly pressured German Chancellor Angela Merkel to back off from strict austerity. This "austerity" forces all countries in the euro zone to give priority to paying off bonds — owned mainly by German-based banks. Austerity has stirred a strong fightback

from workers in many countries whose standard of living has already been cut to the bone.

U.S. banks own some Greek bonds and hold other investments in exposed French and German banks. The euro zone overall has entered a recession that can drag the U.S. economy down. Thus Washington — while far from promoting a pro-worker program — prefers some expansion, as in Obama's 2009 "stimulus."

Austerity is extremely unpopular as it immediately increases the suffering of the workers and poor. This does not mean, however, that a stimulus would relieve all the symptoms of the crisis.

Background to the crisis

The financial crisis hanging over Europe is not just based on government policies. It is an expression of the world capitalist crisis that exploded in the United States in 2008 and is once again growing more intense in Europe. None of the capitalist world leaders has a means for resolving the crisis and resuming economic growth while staying within capitalist limits. And, of course, none will go beyond those limits.

The current crisis is one of capitalist overproduction. But there's a difference between this one and past cyclical crises. The increase in productivity in this era of globalized production has become so rapid that now even the upturn phase and new investments fail to revive the job market. Interested readers can find a more detailed explanation of this development in the recent book "Capitalism at a Dead End" by Fred Goldstein.

Europe's big banks had plenty of capital on hand post-2008, but few profitable industries to invest in. They thus aggressively sought to make loans to governments that would guarantee them. The severe capitalist downturn, however, ruined the economies in Europe's periphery — Por-

tugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain — and paying back became a question mark.

The English-speaking corporate media, using the countries' initials, call these countries "the PIIGS." This is meant as a snide insult to serve the corporate lie that the workers in these countries are lazy and greedy and thereby caused the problem. This slander is a conscious attempt to drive a wedge between the workers in Northern Europe and those in the Mediterranean countries.

The truth is that the German capitalists have beaten down the wages and benefits of workers in Germany over the last 10 years. The resulting increase in productivity — the result of paying workers less — was enough to increase profits as they undersold the competition throughout the euro zone.

Because they are now in one currency zone, the countries where wages didn't drop so much no longer could allow their currency to depreciate to keep their products competitive, as they might have before the euro. Thus companies failed, unemployment grew, tax collections decreased, and it was even harder for them to repay debts, etc.

In Spain, official unemployment is nearly 25 percent. In Greece it's more than 23 percent, in Portugal and Ireland around 15 percent, and nearly 10 percent in France and Italy.

Political fallout of crisis

Over the past few decades, those running the governments of most Western European countries have alternated between an openly pro-capitalist center-right party and a center-left party with ties to labor unions. Both parties served the capitalist system, including supporting imperialist wars. More and more these parties have become as similar as the Republicans and Democrats in the U.S.

While in office, both these political

forces have backed the recent austerity programs. Popular revulsion at austerity has caused voters in recent contests to reject and eject whichever party was in office. In Spain and Portugal, center-right parties replaced "socialist" parties. In France on May 6 the "socialist" Hollande replaced rightist Nicolas Sarkozy. Changes like these also took place in Ireland, Britain, Denmark and many Eastern European countries.

In most of these countries communist parties made relative gains. However, some neo-fascist parties campaigning against immigrants, like the National Front in France, won even larger votes.

In Greece and Italy at the end of 2011, the banks stepped in directly to replace two elected leaders, whose recent loss of support had made them incapable of putting through an unpopular austerity program. Dispensing with the democratic farce of a vote, they appointed "technocrats," meaning bankers, to rule directly, replacing center-left George Papandreou in Greece and billionaire media magnate Silvio Berlusconi in Italy.

Vote is measure of consciousness

We should remember that, as Friedrich Engels wrote, the vote shows the "level of maturity of the working class," and does not in itself determine a change in the social system.

The dramatic election on May 6 in Greece, the center of the financial crisis, indicated a big change in consciousness. The center-left PASOK lost two-thirds of its votes, while the center-right New Democracy's votes were halved. The total for the two went from 77 percent to 32 percent, a loss of 3 million votes from the 5 million cast in 2009. Voters trashed any party that had signed the austerity program imposed earlier by the Troika — the European Union, the European Central Bank and the

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Protests at G8 Summit



The rural area surrounding President Barack Obama's retreat at Camp David, Md., was an armed camp on May 18 and 19 as local police and the military took it over for the Summit Meeting of the G8 countries. Nevertheless, protests took place throughout the day. Occupy movements from Baltimore and Frederick, Md., and Washington, D.C., called a series of events both in Thurmont, Md., the closest town to Camp David, and Frederick. Occupy

Baltimore set up tents and an overnight camp outside Thurmont, staging protests during the entire day. Frederick Occupy held a People's Summit in that town. All roads to Camp David were shut down, as were surrounding public campgrounds. A friendly farmer who asked not to be identified allowed occupiers to camp, however. Tons of media from around the globe interviewed protesters continuously.

— Report and photos by Sharon Black

Africa's food security and the G8 summit

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The Hunger Project reports that out of a global population of 6.8 billion, 925 million people do not have sufficient food for members of their households. Moreover, 98 percent of undernourished people live in the so-called developing countries — those states that are colonies or former colonies.

The Hunger Project also claims that more than 66 percent of all people who are hungry live in seven countries: Bangladesh, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. (thp.org)

In Africa it is difficult to acquire accurate statistics on hunger. It is estimated that around 270 million people there are facing food deficits. The problem of periodic drought in the Horn of Africa, the subcontinent and the Sahel usually translates into acute food deficits and sometimes famine.

Members of the Group of 8 capitalist industrialized states — the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Canada and Russia — held a summit meeting at Camp David, Md., on May 18-19. President Barack Obama announced the "New Alliance for Food and Nutrition Security," touted as a joint program of African nations, international donors and private firms. The project is obviously a public relations exercise on the part of the capitalist states.

In addition to the G8 heads of state, four African leaders were also present for talks on the project. President John Atta Mills of Ghana, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, President Jakaya Mrisho

Kikwete of Tanzania and President Yai Boni of Benin, who is also the current chairperson of the African Union, met with Obama to discuss this partnership.

Capitalism, profit & food in Africa

In a joint statement issued by President Kikwete of Tanzania, Ellen Kullman of the DuPont Corporation and Dr. Rajiv Shah, administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, they claim Africa has experienced significant growth in the last five years, with private investments in the areas of oil, natural gas and minerals.

The statement notes, however, that agricultural development for internal food consumption has not been a focus of interest for the multinational firms. "As a result of decades of underinvestment, today Africa is the only continent that does not produce enough to feed its own citizens. Last year's food crisis and famine in the Horn of Africa serve as a stark reminder that chronic hunger and malnutrition remain a persistent problem on the continent." (The Citizen, Tanzania, May 21)

Yet just three years ago, at another meeting of the G8 in L'Aquila, Italy, some \$22 billion was pledged to address the problem of food deficits in Africa. The Aquila Food Security Initiative was endorsed by 27 countries and 15 international organizations. The program was supposed to be implemented by the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization Investment Center.

At least two aid organizations, InterAction and Oxfam, responded to the new initiative with much skepticism. InterAction pointed out that the program may

be another method for the industrialized states to avoid honoring their previous commitments by relying on the 40 private firms that will supposedly provide the investments. These include some of the world's biggest agribusiness corporations. Oxfam said that the announced funds were a "nice complement at best, a deflection at worst." (huffingtonpost.com, May 18)

Although USAID representative Shah said that 58 percent of the money from the Aquila initiative has been disbursed, he admitted that much of the money is not being allocated as promised.

"The grand promise of L'Aquila was, if you build a plan for agriculture, the donors will help them find the resources for it," said Gregory Adams, director of aid effectiveness at Oxfam America. (New York Times, May 18) However, Adams noted that "donors have put their money in other things."

The ongoing problem of food deficits in both the developed capitalist states and the underdeveloped regions flows directly from the profit-driven production of food. As a result of the legacy of colonialism and imperialism in Africa, most agricultural commodities and mineral resources are produced for export rather than for internal use and consumption.

Prices for exports are largely determined by the capitalist markets. When prices fall, the overall economic conditions in the postcolonial and neocolonial states are adversely impacted.

What is needed is an agricultural and distribution system that is not based on profit but on human need. Access to nutritious food must be viewed as a fundamental human right. □

Quebec students defy cops, call mass protests

By G. Dunkel
Montreal

Quebec students, who have been striking for three months for lower tuition and demonstrating each of the last 25 nights including May 18, have now targeted Law 78, adopted by the Quebec parliament a day earlier.

The students, who have demanded a repeal of 75 percent tuition hikes, are defying the new law by demonstrating and holding marches in large numbers in Montreal and Quebec City and in smaller numbers in Rimouski, Gatineau and Sherbrooke.

The student movement has issued a call for 100,000 people to come out in Montreal on May 22 to mark the 100th day of the strike.

The cops deem these marches illegal. But students are pressing forward to demand their democratic rights to free speech and association. Law 78 requires groups of 50 or more to give police at least eight hours' notice of the time, route and duration of marches.

According to television reports, while hundreds gathered in the three small cities, over a thousand protesters gathered in front of the National Assembly, Quebec's parliament, and marched from there all over old Quebec city and back. The route they followed was not the one they had filed with the cops.

One big argument the Quebec government led by Premier Jean Charest used

in pushing for the law on May 17 was an incident in the Université du Québec à Montréal on May 16. Professors under injunction in the law school were teaching classes against their will. A few hundred strikers broke up the classes by shouting, "Scabs, scabs, scabs, get out."

Some 10,000 people, mainly Franco-phone youths with some professors and parents, gathered in Montreal's Emilie Gamelin Square May 18 and streamed north on Rue Berri at 9 p.m., blocking a few streets and quickly abandoning the route that had been filed with the police. Some fleur-de-lys, the national flag of Quebec, were carried, but there were more red velvet flags of the student protest.

The cops claimed that around 10 p.m. someone threw a molotov cocktail (gasoline bomb) at them, so they declared the march illegal. Marchers wound back to Emilie Gamelin around 11 p.m. Skirmishes between cops and protesters continued until 3 a.m.

Background of strike

The student strike and demonstrations started in early March after the so-called Liberal Party government of Premier Jean Charest proposed a budget that would increase the cost of postsecondary education in Quebec by 15 percent a year over 5 years, doubling the current \$2,400 to just under \$5,000.

Perhaps this is low compared to comparable costs in the U.S., but Quebec's youth say it should be free, as in France. By the

government's own figures, about a third of the students — 155,000 out of 450,000, mostly from the French-language universities — are still on strike after 12 weeks. In each institution the students meet at a regular general assembly to discuss participation in the strike.

Three major student associations have played an active role in Quebec politics for years. They all support the strike. They are the College Student Federation, led by Léo Bureau-Burin, which represents students in the CEGEPS, the equivalent of community colleges in the U.S.; the University Student Federation, led by Martine Desjardins; the Broad Coalition of the Association for Labor-Student Solidarity (CLASSE), whose main spokesperson is Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois. The media often charge CLASSE with being anarcho-communist.

The general line of the student groups

is that Law 78 is "worthy of a police state" and is "a declaration of war against the student movement." When Nadeau-Dubois of CLASSE called the new law "unjust, arbitrary and especially unconstitutional," he noted that it prevented him from responding to some questions the way he would like to. Law 78 sets fines up to \$35,000 for leaders of organizations who urge violation of the law. (Le Devoir, May 18)

Beside student leaders, all three major Quebec labor confederations — the Legal Bar, the Parti Québécois and the Federation of Professional Journalists — and leaders of teacher unions, whose members could lose summer vacations and have to do three-months work in one, all denounced this new law.

This long, stubborn struggle against using education to extract more money from working people will have an impact far beyond Quebec. □



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JPMorgan's gamble

The CEO of JPMorgan Chase, Jamie Dimon, had egg on his face — literally. He was covered with eggs thrown by protesters outside the gate of his company's annual stockholders' meeting in Tampa, Fla.

The May 15 meeting came only a few days after the bank announced it had lost nearly \$3 billion in speculative trades, which Dimon called "riskier, more volatile and less effective" than previously believed. The bank bigwig, who raked in \$23 million in salary and bonuses last year, said his bank was guilty of "errors, sloppiness, bad judgment and egregious mistakes" and then proceeded to fire a high-paid underling.

Markets around the world immediately wiped an additional \$14 billion off JPMorgan's share value. But the eggs thrown in Tampa did not come from the stockholders, who actually gave a resounding vote of confidence to their CEO. They came from progressives who were protesting against big banks: "I'm here because I'm against corporate greed and against the influence corporations have over government," said David Wasman. (Channel 10, Tampa, May 15)

Hedge funds and others who had invested in JPMorgan, especially in London where the suspect trades took place, found themselves facing huge losses.

Some executives from rival companies worried that the losses could also affect confidence on Wall Street. With President Barack Obama's administration pushing for more regulation of investment banks, "the timing could not have been worse," said a spokesperson for the competing big U.S. bank, Citigroup. (RTE News, May 14)

JPMorgan's shock losses "will likely impact all capital market-sensitive stocks due to increased concerns of a more restrictive Volcker Rule," Citigroup said, warning that "it would severely impact liquidity in the markets." (RTE News)

The Volcker Rule is a specific section of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act slated to go into effect this July. It was originally proposed by economist and former U.S. Federal Reserve Chairperson, Paul Volcker to restrict banks from engaging in certain kinds of speculation. Supporters of the Volcker Rule hope regulation will prevent another financial crisis of the type that hit in 2008.

The Volcker Rule is a much-watered-down attempt to reinstate some of the provisions of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933. Passed during the Great Depression after the collapse of thousands of banks, Glass-Steagall tried to erect a wall between the activities of investment banks and commercial banks. At that time, some banks were using depositors' money, often without their knowledge, to speculate on the markets. Among the most egregious of these were J.P. Morgan and NY City Bank (now Citibank).

Over the years, the Glass-Steagall Act was watered down. It was finally repealed with the passage of the Gramm-Leach-Billey Act, named for the three Republican senators who introduced it. With the big banks pushing hard for it, the Democrats went along and it was eventually signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1999.

The large banks have also been lobbying to get the Dodd-Frank Act repealed. Thus, the angst on Wall Street that JPMorgan's shenanigans may now make greater regulation more likely.

But the problems of capitalism cannot be resolved by more regulation. Leaving aside for the moment that the banks and other big businesses invariably find loopholes and ways around the laws, the question remains: Just why do banks and other big businesses take the sorts of risks demonstrated by the JPMorgan debacle? Why did the stockholders in Tampa rally around their CEO instead of egging him?

Bourgeois economists don't talk about this, but there has been a steady trend within the imperialist countries toward the domination of finance capital. This trend was observed by Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin over 100 years ago:

"A steadily increasing proportion of capital in industry ... ceases to belong to the industrialists who employ it. They obtain the use of it only through the medium of the banks which, in relation to them, represent the owners of the capital. On the other hand, the bank is forced to sink an increasing share of its funds in industry. Thus, to an ever greater degree the banker is being transformed into an industrial capitalist." (V.I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism")

Attempts at regulation like Glass-Steagall and the Volcker Rule are nothing more than feeble attempts to slow down this trend.

The big capitalists do not gamble merely because they are greedy or imprudent (even if most of them are). Increasingly over the past few decades, and especially since the recent financial crisis, they are afraid to invest the enormous wealth they have stolen from the workers into expanding production because markets are shrinking in relation to productivity. Investing in goods and services is less and less an option; without jobs or adequate income, fewer and fewer people can afford to purchase them. And profit margins become smaller as the enterprises grow larger, all leading toward a crisis of the system itself.

So the financiers have gone for gambling on complex, obscure financial instruments as their best remaining option. The profits are huge, but so are the risks. When things fall apart, they count on saving their hides by squeezing more out of the workers and oppressed, or with government bailouts, or both. Workers and oppressed people everywhere must see to it that they don't succeed. □

'Love Means Second Chances'

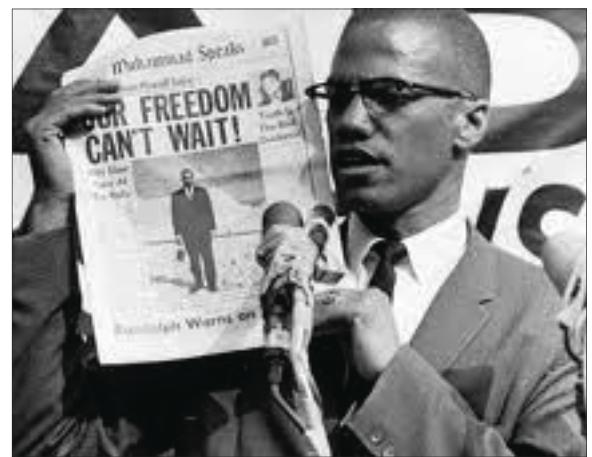
A novel about abortion rights

By Dinae Anderson

Women's reproductive rights, primarily the right to abortion, are still under attack. With recent attacks by the Catholic Church and right-wing extremists, it is only appropriate that Susan Elizabeth Davis has published her first novel, "Love Means Second Chances." Set in 1991, college student Christy, whose family is Catholic, battles with her protective but loving mom, Carole, when she decides to have an abortion. The story also revolves around Carole's own past, when she be-



Legacies of Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh live on today



Ho Chi Minh and Malcolm X.

By Larry Hales

May 19 was the birthday of two beloved internationalists and revolutionaries.

Ho Chi Minh was born in 1890. He was the founder, in 1941, of the Viet Minh independence movement, which eventually kicked the French out of Vietnam in 1954. He was also the leader of the National Liberation Front that led the fight against the U.S. colonizers who replaced the French.

Ho had traveled extensively in Europe, the United States and Asia, and had assisted movements in those countries, even becoming a founding member of the French Communist Party. Ho Chi Minh did not live to see the liberation and unification of his country once the U.S. military was kicked out in 1975.

Malcolm X was born in Nebraska in 1925. He became one of the great Black leaders in this country, seeing far beyond the fight for civil rights and catapulting that movement onto the international stage. He inspired the militant Black liberation movements of the 1960s.

It was no cosmic feat, nor was it fate, that these two were born on the same date. But the conditions in both countries and the qualities of both made them great revolutionary leaders of their time. Both Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh are to be commemorated today because the struggles that they were part of and led are ongoing. They are the struggles of all workers and the oppressed.

Malcolm stated the above very clearly in 1965: "It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of Black against White, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed

against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter."

An outspoken opponent of the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, Malcolm X asked why it was that Black people were expected to be violent toward the Vietnamese and at the same time, be passive against racist KKK terror in the South.

Ho Chi Minh wrote in a 1924 essay on the conditions of Black people in the United States. He exposed the ruse of so-called democracy in the United States. In the essay he states: "It is well known that the Black race is the most oppressed and most exploited of the human family. It is well known that the spread of capitalism and the discovery of the New World had as an immediate result the rebirth of slavery, which was, for centuries, a scourge for the Negroes and a bitter disgrace for humanity. What everyone does not perhaps know is that after 65 years of so-called emancipation, American Negroes still endure atrocious moral and material sufferings, of which the most cruel and horrible is the custom of lynching."

Both Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh saw the importance of the global class struggle, in whatever terms they placed it. As the fight against oppression becomes more radicalized, because of the increasing reactionary tendencies of the capitalist class and its governments, it is even more important that the movement remember the revolutionary leaders of the past and make the commemorations relevant to today. The struggle has not changed — just the urgency for greater internationalism, due to the voracious capitalist system, which is greatly expanding and thus radicalizing workers the world over.

Reprinted from the Workers World issue of May 24, 2006.

Book Review

Besides being a strong pro-choice novel about today's society, it is one of the most humane and responsive books I've read in a long time. I am very surprised that this is actually Davis' first novel! I would highly recommend this book for anyone not only with an open mind, but with an open heart as well.

Anderson is a high school student in New York City and a member of *Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST)*.

Sue Davis, the coordinator of the Workers World Supporter Program for the last 35 years, writes about reproductive justice and contributes the *On the Picket Line* column to WW. The book can be purchased from www.lovemeanssecondchances.com.

U.S. remains hostile to China

While supporting rightists & demanding concessions

By Fred Goldstein

The capitalist government and the big business media in the U.S. have firmly and vociferously taken sides against Bo Xilai and any manifestation of leftist policy in China. These same media and government have also demanded economic and political concessions from the Chinese government.

But the Chinese leaders' massive campaign of suppression against Bo Xilai, the former Communist Party secretary of Chongqing; the recently negotiated permission for U.S. firms to own up to 49 percent of Chinese non-bank financial institutions; and the release to the U.S. of the counterrevolutionary lawyer Chen Guangcheng cannot diminish the underlying, profound hostility of the U.S. ruling class toward China.

The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post, among other mouthpieces of big business and the State Department, have been working with traitorous bourgeois elements and anti-Bo bureaucrats inside the Chinese state security system and the government to spread reams of leaked and unsubstantiated hearsay against Bo Xilai, while at the same time crying out for the "rule of law."

It is reminiscent of the way the press works to frame up oppressed people in this country, especially revolutionaries like Mumia Abu-Jamal, and conduct trials by government leak and media slander. This is precisely the way in which CNN, NBC, CBS, ABC and other media are preparing the ground for freeing the cop-supported, racist vigilante George Zimmerman, who killed Trayvon Martin.

They are in close collaboration with the right wing in China, who desperately need to reduce the case of Bo to a criminal matter to conceal what it really is: a 21st-century version of the earlier two-line struggle between the left and the "capitalist roaders" over whether to take China further down the capitalist road or to slow down reliance on the capitalist market in favor of state planning and state-owned enterprises.

If the Chinese leadership can reduce the matter to one of corruption or criminality, they do not have to deal with the progressive accomplishments of Bo in Chongqing, where he built massive low-cost housing for the workers, increased social spending in order to raise the masses' standard of living, paved the way for the peasantry to gain urban status and other benefits, and emphasized "red culture" in state-owned media and at public events.

The capitalist media in this country repeat every unverified rumor, accusation and lurid detail spread by "anonymous sources" and suspect individuals against Bo, as well as making up their own. These reports poison public opinion in the U.S. and the West. They then go back into China through the Chinese press and social media, reinforcing the campaign.

The Chinese government humiliated itself by freeing Chen Guangcheng into U.S. custody after the sightless lawyer was sequestered into the U.S. Embassy via the most egregious CIA intervention. Chen is part of a network of Chinese counterrevolutionaries who used opposition to China's one-child policy as a lever in an anticommunist campaign. The affair was a total violation of Chinese sovereignty, which, in more militant days, would have called for national anti-U.S. demonstrations.

The Chinese government made this

The U.S. has a dual approach in its relations with China. It tries to gain economic and political concessions by carrying out negotiations on a government-to-government basis, and at the same time, it carries a big stick.

concession during negotiations with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner in order to keep the talks from breaking down. During the negotiations the Chinese leaders also made concessions to Wall Street, while Geithner and Clinton stonewalled the Chinese on their requests to be allowed to import crucial items of technology that are now banned by the Pentagon on "national security" grounds.

Whether Washington was angry because all its demands were not met, or whether the U.S. was trying to attack while the Chinese leadership was off balance with a major internal struggle, or both, the visit was immediately followed by escalation of the anti-China offensive.

Times attacks leadership for 'corruption'

The New York Times opened up a front-page attack on not just Bo but the entire Chinese top leadership for alleged corruption, including President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao and their children. This "newspaper of record" for the U.S. bourgeoisie then expanded its attack on the Communist Party of China itself.

Much was left unsaid in the charges. Most of the accusations amounted to the fact that children of the leaders were in charge of many state-owned enterprises and that they attended Western educational institutions.

Of course, any degree of nepotism, privilege or corruption that exists at the leadership level is an absolutely impermissible violation of socialist norms, and should be stamped out. That was the goal of the great Cultural Revolution initiated by Mao Zedong. It was the defeat of Mao and the left that led to the present regime, which adheres to the concept of "market socialism" invented by Deng Xiaoping. We doubt that the New York Times wants to revive the Cultural Revolution.

The capitalist press reach unparalleled heights of hypocrisy when they condemn the Communist Party of China's leadership for "corruption." These charges derive from the deepest hatred of the Chinese Revolution and all that is associated with it, including the CPC and the People's Liberation Army. The New York Times and the ruling class it speaks for — and it does speak for the ruling class in this case — would like to see the total destruction, not only of the party and the PLA, but of all remaining institutions of socialism established by the Chinese Revolution.

Furthermore, these charges have nothing to do with concern about corruption. The U.S. is the land of corruption. Frederick Engels noted back in the 19th century that corruption was one of the principal instruments of rule used by the U.S. capitalist class. The robber barons bought legislatures and got titles to lands for their railroads and mining companies — lands that had been expropriated from the Native peoples during genocidal campaigns.

Today Washington, D.C., is populated by more than 40,000 lobbyists whose occupation is to foster corruption among the legislators and other branches of the capitalist government. Every state capi-

tal in the U.S. is infected with a similar plague of corruptors.

Super PACs, empowered by the Supreme Court, now openly ply candidates with tens of millions of dollars. And these Super PACs are financed by billionaires seeking to corrupt their candidates.

Tariffs on Chinese solar panels

Within days of the negotiations in China, the Commerce Department issued stinging tariffs of 31 percent on Chinese solar panels. China is the largest exporter of solar panels in the world. It has developed the technology to its highest state.

This tariff was levied by the Commerce Department on the grounds that China is a state economy and therefore its exports are unfairly subsidized. This ruling has been pending now for over a year, but it was levied right after the U.S.-China talks, in a stinging rebuke to the Chinese leadership.

The Chinese leaders appropriately reacted with fury and denounced the measures as protectionist. "China's exported solar panels have a relatively competitive price, mainly because of technical research and development work done by Chinese companies," said China Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei. "At the same time, China has imported a lot of raw materials and production equipment from the U.S., and this has benefited the U.S. economy. ... This action by the U.S. has hurt cooperation between China and the U.S. in the renewable-energy sector, and hurt the U.S. itself. We hope the U.S. will appropriately resolve this issue." (Wall Street Journal, May 18)

The truth is that these tariffs will hurt the masses in the U.S. by drastically raising the cost of solar panels, just when the Obama administration is touting renewable energy and "a green economy." It will also lead to the loss of jobs here among the 100,000 workers who are presently employed in installing affordable Chinese solar panels.

Pentagon attacks China's military

On the heels of the tariffs, the Pentagon issued a report denouncing China for building up its military and called it "the lead cyberattacker of U.S. computers." (Christian Science Monitor, May 12)

A New York Times article on May 19, quoting the Pentagon, said that China's "air force is 'transforming into a force capable of offshore offensive and defensive operations,' the report said, with prototypes of a stealth fighter seen starting last year. Other areas of investment include defenses against ballistic missiles, early warning and air-defense missiles, and their land and naval equivalents."

Excerpts from this report were made public just after the Chinese Minister of National Defense, Gen. Liang Guanglie, ended a meeting in Washington with Pentagon chief Leon Panetta.

In other words, the U.S. has a dual approach in its relations with China. It tries to gain economic and political concessions by carrying out negotiations on a government-to-government basis, and at

the same time, it carries a big stick.

Left out of the Times report about China building up its military was that the U.S. has recently carried out so-called "joint military exercises" in the Philippines directed at China, at a time when the Philippines and China are engaged in a dispute over island territories in the South China Sea. "Joint military exercises" means U.S. military exercises. The Philippine government and military are hardly a threat to the Chinese military.

Marines are being rotated out of Iraq and Afghanistan into Australia as part of the Obama administration's (read Pentagon's) "pivot" toward Asia and the Pacific region. This so-called pivot is in large part a soft military threat disguised as an alleged change in policy. In fact, the U.S. has been pivoting toward the Pacific since 1854, when Commodore Matthew C. Perry sent gunboats to "open up" Japan. The U.S. colonized and conquered Hawaii, Samoa and the Philippines and sent troops to put down the Boxer Rebellion in China toward the end of that century.

Washington has had the goal of conquering and ruling over the Pacific Basin for more than a century. The U.S. threw massive forces into the war against Japanese imperialism in the Pacific with a view to conquering China. The Chinese revolution of 1949 put an end to the Pentagon's strategic drive.

The U.S. then proceeded to try to isolate the Chinese Revolution, keeping it out of the United Nations for a quarter of a century, building up the Seventh Fleet to menace the Chinese People's Republic, and launching two wars, one in Korea, followed by one in Vietnam, both on China's borders.

The profound hostility of the U.S. ruling class to China and the Chinese Revolution has deep historic and material roots. Washington and Wall Street will be satisfied with nothing less than the complete recolonization of China, the destruction of the remaining pillars of socialism, and the untrammeled rule of capital over one-fifth of the human race who dwell there.

No concessions by the Chinese leadership will mitigate this hostility. The cause of this hostility lies precisely in the continued existence of the socialist sector of China. The Chinese leadership can protect China against irreversible incursions of imperialism, even on a nationalist basis, only by defending the state-owned enterprises. They are the foundation of its economic survival and the development of its military and the PLA.

In the long run, the only salvation for China is for the Chinese masses to retake the center stage of Chinese history. This is the surest guarantee of socialism in China and victory over capitalist counterrevolution and imperialism.

To be continued.

Goldstein is the author of "Low-Wage Capitalism" and "Capitalism at a Dead End." More information about these books and other materials is available at www.lowwagecapitalism.com. The author can be reached at fgoldstein@workers.org.

Como muestra el informe sobre la salud mundial

La tasa de nacimientos prematuros en EEUU está entre los peores del mundo

Por Ellen Catalinotto

La tasa mundial de nacimientos prematuros está aumentando, tanto en los países industrializados como en los más pobres. Más de uno de cada 10 bebés, ó 15 millones, ha nacido prematuramente en 2010. Más de un millón de estos bebés morirán en el primer mes de vida, haciendo la prematuridad la principal causa de muerte del recién nacido.

Muchos/as sobrevivientes tienen incapacidades permanentes de aprendizaje, enfermedad pulmonar crónica y pérdida de visión y audición, según "Born Too Soon" (Nacido demasiado pronto), un informe sobre prematuridad publicado el 2 de mayo por la Organización Mundial de la Salud, junto con expertos/as en este campo provenientes de 11 países.

Estados Unidos ocupa la posición 130 dentro de los 184 países. Estados Unidos tiene uno de los peores índices, con 12 bebés prematuros por 100 nacimientos. Dentro de Estados Unidos, la tasa de prematuridad afroamericana de 17,5 por ciento, es más alta que las tasas estimadas de nacimientos prematuros en países

devastados por la guerra y el hambre en África y Asia, y sólo ligeramente inferior que la de Malawi, que tiene la tasa más alta del mundo: 18,1 por ciento.

Existe una amplia y creciente brecha entre países ricos y pobres en la supervivencia de los bebés más frágiles. En los países de bajos ingresos, donde se producen más del 90 por ciento de esos nacimientos, las infecciones, la malaria, el VIH y las altas tasas de embarazos de adolescentes se encuentran entre las causas principales conocidas de los partos prematuros. En los países más industrializados, incluyendo a Estados Unidos, las cesáreas médicaamente innecesarias y las inducciones de parto antes de que los embarazos lleguen a su término, contribuyen a los nacimientos prematuros. Sin embargo, tanto en los países ricos como en los pobres, alrededor de la mitad de los nacimientos prematuros carecen de una causa identificada. La contaminación del aire y el humo indirecto de personas que fuman son los únicos riesgos ambientales mencionados en el informe.

Muchos nacimientos prematuros pueden ser evitados mediante el acceso uni-

versal a la planificación familiar gratis — especialmente para adolescentes, mediante la atención prenatal que detecta y trata infecciones y enfermedades como la diabetes; mediante el soporte nutricional; y mediante la prevención de la violencia contra la mujer. Estas medidas de salud pública están bajo ataque por el ala derechista de la clase capitalista que promueve el mercado libre, la privatización y la austeridad en los Estados Unidos y alrededor del mundo.

Una vez que ha comenzado el proceso de parto prematuro, una inyección de corticoide a la madre que sólo cuesta \$1, ayudaría a los pulmones del bebé a desarrollarse, y considerablemente reduciría los problemas respiratorios después del nacimiento. Los antibióticos podrían retrasar el parto y prevenir la infección cuando las membranas que rodean al feto se rompen antes de que el bebé esté a término.

Más de cuatro de cada cinco nacimientos prematuros ocurre entre las 32 a 37 semanas de embarazo. Una atención de apoyo de baja tecnología para estos bebés puede salvarle la vida a muchos de ellos y reducir las incapacidades. Estas medidas

incluyen el contacto directo con la madre para sentir su calor, la lactancia materna temprana y exclusiva, y la limpieza y cuidado del cordón umbilical.

Los que nacen muy prematuros — de 28 a 32 semanas — o extremadamente prematuros, antes de las 28 semanas, necesitarán atención más intensiva y costosa para poder sobrevivir. Estos bebés a menudo sufren incapacidades físicas y de aprendizaje aún cuando estén atendidos en las unidades neonatales de cuidados intensivos más avanzadas.

El informe recomienda actualizar las destrezas de los/as proveedores/as de salud para que puedan cuidar a los bebés prematuros, el suministro de medicamentos y equipos esenciales a los países pobres, y profundizar el estudio sobre las causas y la prevención del parto prematuro. Con los países agobiados por la crisis económica capitalista mundial y la industria de salud con fines de lucro no se puede contar para que pongan en práctica estas recomendaciones.

Las mujeres de todo el mundo tendrán que luchar para hacerlas realidad.

Catalinotto es comadrona colegiada.

Ataques contra maestros/as intentan debilitar sindicatos

Por G. Dunkel
Nueva York

La ola de despidos de maestros/as, el auge de las escuelas "chárter" y el alegato de que los/as maestros/as y sus sindicatos están opuestos/as a las evaluaciones, se han convertido en un ataque contra los sindicatos de docentes en todo Estados Unidos.

Los dos principales sindicatos educativos, la Federación Americana de Maestros (AFT) y la Asociación Nacional de Educación (NEA), se encuentran entre los sindicatos más grandes en los Estados Unidos. Incluso en estados como Dakota del Norte, donde los sindicatos representan sólo al 3,2 por ciento de los/as trabajadores/as, o en Carolina del Sur y Georgia, donde es ilegal que los/as empleadores públicos negocien con los sindicatos de docentes, todavía existen y funcionan.

La escalofriante cifra de 300.000 maestros/as perdieron sus empleos desde agosto del 2008 a agosto del 2011, un descenso del 7,1 por ciento. Según el informe de la Casa Blanca "Puestos de ma-

estros/as en riesgo", otros/as 280.000 trabajadores/as de la educación enfrentan despidos en 2012.

Los derechistas han culpado a los sindicatos de maestros/as por las deficiencias y fracasos del sistema educativo, cualquiera que sea el papel del/la docente. La escasez de personal, las aulas atestadas, los edificios deteriorados, los salones demasiado calientes o fríos, la lluvia que se cuela en las aulas a través de ventanas que no cierran, etc., todo queda ignorado. Además, los/as maestros/as pierden semanas de tiempo de instrucción calificando exámenes que a menudo son producidos incompetentemente.

Los sindicatos de docentes de Chicago y San Francisco han anunciado que podrían salir en huelga el próximo otoño. En San Francisco, el distrito planea reducir los salarios y beneficios por 30 millones de dólares en los próximos dos años.

En Chicago, los/as maestros/as están protestando los cambios en la jornada escolar, sobre cómo se determina el salario docente y cómo se evalúa el rendimiento. La presidenta del sindicato Chicago Teach-

ers Union, Karen Lewis dijo, "Nunca he visto, en mis 22 años de magisterio y en los salones escolares, este tipo de hostilidad y esta falta de respeto para los/as maestros/as". (Huffington Post, 13 de mayo)

Sindicatos de Nueva York luchan contra cierre de escuelas

Nueva York tiene cerca de 1,1 millón de estudiantes desde el Primero hasta el 12º grado en las escuelas públicas. La United Federation of Teachers (UFT) de Nueva York, el local más grande de la AFT, ha rehusado firmar un acuerdo con el Departamento de Educación (DE) relativo a un plan sobre los exámenes anuales de rendimiento profesional. Respondiendo, la administración del multimillonario alcalde Michael Bloomberg ha cerrado escuelas arbitrariamente definidas como "fracasadas". Después de despedir a la mitad del personal, su administración las reabrirá en el otoño con nombres diferentes.

Generalmente, el DE saca a los/as profesores/as más antiguos/as y experimentados/as, que también ganan los salarios más altos. Sus reemplazos son más jóvenes, menos experimentados/as y por supuesto, reciben un salario menor.

Este es el modelo prescrito establecido por el gobierno federal para las escuelas que considere "fracasadas".

Una profesora de una escuela superior especializada en la ciudad de Nueva York, cuyas clases han sido filmadas y publicadas en un sitio Web nacional, dijo a Workers World/Mundo Obrero: "Me siento atacada como mujer, como maestra y como sindicalista por la administración del alcalde Bloomberg".

El alcalde Bloomberg ha cerrado 117

escuelas desde que asumió el control del sistema escolar en 2002, mientras abrió 396 escuelas nuevas que raramente sirven a los/as estudiantes con deficiencias educativas. Los padres y madres, alumnos/as y maestros/as a menudo han protestado estos cierres; dicen que la verdadera solución es proporcionar más recursos.

El 26 de abril, el Panel para la Políticas Educativas de la ciudad designado por Bloomberg, votó por cerrar 24 escuelas "deficientes" adicionales utilizando el modelo federal. Ese mismo día, Michael Mulgrew, Presidente de la UFT, lideró una protesta de padres y maestros/as frente al ayuntamiento, con pancartas que leían "Apoyen a nuestros niños" y "Verdadera reforma requiere inversión".

El 7 de mayo, la UFT y el sindicato de directores de escuelas públicas demandaron a la ciudad para evitar el cierre. Ernest Logan, del Consejo de Supervisores y Administradores Escolares (CSAE), los calificó de "farsas de cierres" y "un intento por evadir la negociación colectiva". (Daily News, 7 de mayo) El ataque de Bloomberg contra el sindicato respecto a la demanda recibió una cobertura amplia en los medios de comunicación. La UFT y el CSAE han demandado a la ciudad dos veces antes sin mayor efecto.

La UFT ha hecho algunos esfuerzos por construir coaliciones con la participación de los padres y otros sindicatos. También ha organizado maestros/as en las escuelas "chárter" que no están sindicalizadas. Pero su principal objetivo ha sido apoyar al Partido Demócrata en las elecciones.

Más que eso será necesario para rescatar a las escuelas de la ciudad para los/as estudiantes y los/as maestros/as. □

LIBERTAD POR LOS CINCO CUBANOS



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llort. Rene González Sehewert salió de la cárcel, aunque deberá permanecer en Estados Unidos bajo el régimen de libertad supervisada.